We claim:

1. A method of transferring and using information, comprising the steps of:
   (a) obtaining information related to a plurality of items from an existing database;
   (b) reformatting the information in a desired manner to facilitate the use of the information by an RFID reader;
   (c) exporting the information to a database stored on a data storage device; and
   (d) using the information on the data storage device with an RFID reader in conjunction with the interrogation of RFID tags associated with the items.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the existing database includes information correlating the items to item identifiers.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein the item identifiers comprise barcodes.

4. The method of claim 2, wherein the item identifiers comprise at least one of characters and handwriting.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the information exported to the data storage device comprises at least one ordered list of items.

6. The method of claim 5, wherein the ordered list is a list of items in an order that the items are to be located in a storage area.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the information exported to the data storage device comprises at least one search list of items.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein the data storage device is a removable non-volatile data storage device.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein the removable non-volatile data storage device is a solid-state device.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein the removable non-volatile solid-state data storage device is a compact flash memory card.

11. The method of claim 1, wherein the information exported to the data storage device comprises more than one file, each file including at least one database record.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein the method further comprises the step of associating at least two files that include information describing database records related to consecutive items in an ordered list.

13. The method of claim 11, wherein the method further comprises the step of determining that two files do not include information describing database records related to consecutive items.

14. The method of claim 1, wherein the information is reformatted by selecting from each record in the existing database information to be provided in a primary information field and information to be provided in a secondary information field on the database on the data storage device.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein at least one of the information fields comprises information from a record related to a single type of information.

16. The method of claim 14, wherein at least one of the information fields comprises information from a record related to more than one type of information.

17. The method of claim 14, wherein at least one of the information fields comprises information from a record in the existing database that represents only a portion of the information contained in that record.

18. The method of claim 14, wherein the information selected for the primary and secondary information fields is selected from the group consisting of the name or title of the item, the identification number of the item, or the call number of the item.

19. The method of claim 14, wherein the method further comprises the step of displaying information obtained from the primary information field and information obtained from the secondary information field on the RFID device for observation by a user.

20. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of reformatting the data comprises identifying multiple records in the existing database that relate to equivalent items.

21. The method of claim 20, wherein the method further comprises the step of providing only one entry on the database stored on the data storage device relative to that item.

22. The method of claim 20, wherein the method further comprises the step of comparing multiple entries from the existing database to determine whether the multiple entries relate to equivalent items using at least one of a primary information field and a secondary information field.

23. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of reformatting the data comprises identifying multiple records in the existing database that relate to equivalent items.

24. The method of claim 23, wherein the method further comprises the step of assigning the same storage area location to each identical item.

25. The method of claim 23, wherein the method further comprises the step of assigning a range of storage area locations to each identical item, so that each such item located within the range by the RFID device is considered by the device to be in the proper location.

26. The method of claim 1, wherein the method further comprises the step of previewing the format of at least one entry for the database on the data storage device prior to step (c).

27. The method of claim 26, wherein the entry includes information selected from the group consisting of an item identifier, a primary information field, a secondary information field, and a barcode.

28. The method of claim 1, wherein the method further comprises the step of providing a summary log related to the exportation of information.

29. The method of claim 28, wherein the summary log comprises information selected from a group consisting of a description of the files that were exported, the number of entries that were exported, the elapsed time for the transfer, and the number of errors encountered during the export.

30. The method of claim 28, wherein the method further comprises providing a detailed error log that provides information related to errors detected in the exported information.

31. The method of any one of claims 1 through 30, wherein the items are library materials.

32. The method of any one of claims 1 through 30, wherein the items are files.

33. The method of any one of claims 1 through 30, wherein the items are pieces of evidence.

34. The method of any one of claims 1 through 30, wherein the items are pallets or containers.

35. Software comprising instructions for carrying out the method of any of claims 1 through 30.

36. In combination:

(a) software for reformatting information obtained from an existing database having an arbitrary data management system into reformatted information stored in a

database for use by an RFID reader, the databases comprising entries related to items of interest; and

(b) an RFID reader that interrogates RFID tags associated with items and transfers information related to the interrogated RFID-tagged item from the RFID reader to the database, from the database to the RFID reader, or both.

37. The combination of claim 36, wherein the RFID reader is a handheld RFID reader.

38. The combination of claim 36, wherein the RFID reader is a component of a workstation for processing items selected by users.

39. The combination of claim 38, wherein the workstation is a workstation adapted for use by a library employee.

40. The combination of claim 38, wherein the workstation is a self-service station adapted for use by the user who selected the items.

41. The combination of claim 38, wherein the workstation is a conversion station for converting non-RFID-tagged items to RFID-tagged items.

42. The combination of claim 41, wherein the non-RFID-tagged items are barcoded items.

43. The combination of claim 41, wherein the non-RFID-tagged items are identified by characters.

44. The combination of claim 41, wherein the non-RFID-tagged items are items regarding which a user enters information describing the items into the workstation.

45. A method of using information related to RFID tags associated with items of interest, comprising the steps of:

(a) selecting a category of items using a user interface associated with a computer;

(b) obtaining a list of at least one RFID-tagged item; and

(c) associating information related to the at least one item with the selected category.

46. The method of claim 45, wherein the method further includes the step of:

(d) saving the categorized information in a database.

47. The method of claim 46, wherein step (a) comprises selecting a category from among a list of categories displayed on the user interface.

48. The method of claim 46, wherein step (a) comprising selecting a category and designating the attributes of items in that category to define the category.

49. The method of claim 46, wherein the category describes a location where an item was interrogated.

50. The method of claim 46, wherein the category describes a class of items.

51. The method of claim 46, wherein categories from which a user may select are uploaded from a data storage device and displayed on the user interface.

52. A method of interrogating RFID tags associated with items of interest, comprising the steps of:

(a) selecting at least two categories of items using a user interface associated with a computer;

(b) obtaining a list of at least one RFID-tagged item; and

(c) categorizing information related to the at least one item(s) associated with the interrogated RFID tag(s) in at least one of the categories.

53. The method of claim 52, wherein the method further includes the step of:

(d) saving the categorized information in a database.

54. The method of claim 53, wherein the categories are mutually exclusive.

55. The method of claim 53, wherein the categories are not mutually exclusive.

56. The method of claim 53, wherein one category describes whether an item is present in a storage area.

57. The method of claim 53, wherein the categories describe different types of items.

58. The method of claim 53, wherein information necessary to categorize each RFID-tagged item may be obtained from a database stored in memory of the RFID reader.

59. The method of claim 58, wherein the database is stored on a removable data storage device.

60. A method of interrogating RFID tags associated with items of interest, comprising the steps of:

(a) selecting at least one category of items using a user interface associated with an RFID reader;

(b) interrogating RFID tags associated with items, at least one of which is within the category of items;

(c) categorizing information related to the at least one item(s) associated with the interrogated RFID tag(s) in at least one of the categories; and

(d) ignoring any RFID-tagged-item that may not be categorized in at least one category.

61. The method of claim 60, wherein the method further includes the step of:

(e) saving the categorized information in a database.

62. The method of claim 61, wherein at least one category describes items of a certain type.

63. The method of claim 61, wherein the database is stored on a removable data storage device.

64. A method of using information related to items associated with RFID tags, comprising the steps of:

(a) obtaining a list of information related to the RFID tags, the list organized in the order in which the RFID tags were interrogated by an RFID reader; and

(b) organizing the information in an order other than the order in which the tags were interrogated by the RFID reader.

65. The method of claim 64, wherein only information related to RFID-tagged items that are out of position by at least a predetermined amount is organized in the order.

66. The method of claim 64, wherein the method further includes the step of:

(c) comparing the organized information from step (b) with a predetermined ordered list.

67. The method of claim 66, wherein the predetermined ordered list is a list of items in an expected order of location in a storage area.

68. The method of claim 66, wherein the method further comprises the step of:

(d) creating a list of items that are on the predetermined ordered list but not among the ordered list from step (b).

69. The method of claim 66, wherein the method further comprises the step of:

(d) creating a list of items that are on the ordered list from step (b) but not among the predetermined ordered list.

70. The method of claim 66, wherein both the ordered list of step (b) and the predetermined ordered list are provided to a computer by a portable RFID reader.

71. The method of claim 66, wherein both the ordered list of step (b) and the predetermined ordered list are stored on a removable data storage device by a portable RFID reader, and uploaded from the removable data storage device to a computer.